Question for written answer E-001351/2013
to the Commission
Rule 117
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Subject: EFSA risk assessment of neonicotinoids

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) was given the task by the Commission of assessing the risks linked to the use of the neonicotinoids Clothianidin, Imidacloprid and Thiamethoxam in treating seeds. The effects of these on bee populations have been established and the results obtained identified a number of risks for bees. In some cases the risk assessment could not be completed, owing to a lack of data and because of time pressure. In response, the Commission raised the question of a ban on these active substances. The wide-ranging economic and environmental impact of such a decision gives rise to the following questions:

1. What is the Commission's view of the data gap, as a result of which the EFSA's investigations are not representative of the EU as a whole?

2. Is account being taken of the fact that earlier, completed scientific studies concerned with evaluating active substances and which contain specific results and recommendations for action were not included in this assessment?

3. Measures have been taken in some Member States with close cooperation between beekeepers and the agricultural sector which have produced clear results. Have these been taken into account?

4. In many Member States the incidence of invasive pests such as Diabrotica virgifera (Western corn rootworm) is causing an increasing number of failed harvests. Will there be an assessment and a recommendation for alternative methods in the fight against harmful insects?

5. With regard to recommending alternative methods, can the Commission ensure that farmers will continue to be able to exercise free choice in the matter of GMO crops?